

The General Meaning of Category of Tenses

Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla kizi, Niyatova Maftuna Norbek kizi

Jizzakh branch of the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, The faculty of Psychology, The teachers at the department of Foreign languages

Annotation: The article deals with the importance of the category of tenses, coming into existence, the utilizing of them in periods of time and various forms in verbal system. This paper provides detailed suggestions with illustrations, background of previous researches, foundations, results of them and so on. The authors and researchers with all level may use in practical and theoretical researches with the help of data in the article.

Keywords: Tenses, Infinitive, subordinate times, the category of futurity option, a tertiary equipollent opposition, a binary privative opposition, absolute and non-absolute time.

The category of tense may be defined as a verbal category which reflects the objective category of time and expresses on this background the relations between the time of the action and the time of the utterance.

The initial aim of any language learner is to be able to communicate in the target language in the genuine situations independently. So, “language”, “learning”, “teaching” are dynamic, fluid, mutable processes. There is nothing fixed about them. So as to communicate, we can use tenses according to the meanings in contexts. In English there are three tenses (past, present and future) represented by the forms *wrote*, *writes*, *will write*. Strangely enough, some doubts have been expressed about the existence of a future tense in Engl. O. Jespersen discussed this question more than once. The reason why Jespersen denied the existence of a future tense in English was that the English future is expressed by the phrase “*shall/will + infinitive*”, their original meaning (*shall* an element of obligation and *will* an element of volition). However, this reasoning is not convincing. It is well known that a present tense form may also be used when the action belongs to the future. “*Maroo is coming tomorrow*” So it might also have been expressed by the future tense: *Maroo will come tomorrow*. Maroo’s arrival tomorrow is part of a plan already fixed at the present. So the three main divisions of time are represented in the English verbal system by the three tenses. Each of them may appear in the common and in the continuous aspect. Thus we get six tense-aspect forms. Besides these six, however, there are two more, namely, the future-in-the-past and the future-continuous-in-the-past. The future-in-the-past and future-cont-in-the-past do not easily fit into a system of tenses represented by a straight line running out of the past into the future. They are a deviation from this straight line: their starting point is not the present, from which the past and the future are reckoned, but the past itself.

The category of tense: Tense is a grammatical expression of objective distinctions of time into the past, present and future. The existence of this category is undebated in all Indo-European languages, but within the category there are some debated problems: 1.the number of tenses; 2.the existence of the Future Tense; 3. the syntagmatic meanings of the past tenses; 4.the nature of the Future-in- the Past. There exist classifications embracing a rich variety of tenses. Temporal relations are considered by some scholars to be more complex than merely the present, the past and the future. Otto Jespersen’s classification is most peculiar. He distinguishes main or simple times (Present and Past), subordinate times which are points in time posterior or anterior to some other point (in the present, in the past or in the future). This is a logical scheme(the before past time, the after past time, the before future time, the after future time), with no simple future (She gave birth to a son who was to cause her great anxiety (the after past). He excluded the future on the ground that in English there are no grammatical means to express pure futurity, the “so called future” being modal.

The writer of a popular manual in practical grammar prof. Kaushanskaya distinguished 16 tenses. Her practical scheme of tenses is based on O. Jespersen’s scheme and comprises Progressive tenses (continuous,

long) and Perfect tenses. There are 4 Indefinite tenses, 4 Continuous tenses, 4 Perfect tenses and 4 Perfect Continuous tenses. The classifications embracing 3 tenses were advanced by Profs. Smirnitsky, Ilyish, Khlebnikova, et al. These classifications are based on a three tenses oppositional approach. It is the Past, the Present and the Future (a tertiary equipollent opposition: went::goes:shall/will go). In two-tense classifications we find The Past and the Present, or The Present and the Future (a binary privative opposition). In some schemes the Present is treated as an abstraction which cannot be objectively established. Others treat the Present stretching limitlessly into the future and into the past (prospectively and retrospectively). According to the concept worked out by Prof. Blokh, there exist two tense categories:

1. The category of primary time provides for the absolute expression of the time of the process denoted by the verb. The formal sign of the opposition is with regular verbs, suffix -ed and with irregular verbs, phonemic change. The suffix marks the verbal form of the past time leaving the opposite form unmarked. An additional reason for identifying the verbal past - present time system as a separate grammatical category is provided by the fact that this system is specifically marked by the 'do' forms of the indefinite aspect. The specific feature of the category of primary time is that it divides all the tense forms of the English verb into two temporal planes: the plane of the present and the plane of the past, which affects also the future forms.

2. The category of prospective time. The contrast which underlines this category is between an after-action and non-after-action. Future is the marked member of this opposition. The category of prospect is different in principal from the category of primary time while the primary time is present-oriented, the prospective time is purely relative. The future form of the verb shows that the denoted process is prospected as an after-action relative to some of the action or state or event, the timing of which marks the zero level for it. A certain modal colouring of the English Future can't be denied, especially in the verbal form of the first person. The future of the English word is highly specific as its auxiliary are verbs of obligation and volition. In some modal uses of the verb "shall and will", the idea of the future is not expressed at all. Within the system of the English future tense peculiar minor category is expressed which effects only the forms of the 1st person. It is constituted by the oppositions of the forms **will**, **shall + inf.** expressing voluntary or non-voluntary future. And it may be called **the category of futurity option**. The view that shall and will retain their modal meanings in all their uses was defended by such a recognised authority on English grammar as Otto Jespersen. When speaking of the expression of time by the verb, it is necessary to strictly distinguish between the general notion of time and the lexical denotation of time.

Time denotations can be absolute and non-absolute: The absolute time denotation distributes the intellectual perception of time among three spheres: the sphere of the present, with the present moment included within its framework; the sphere of the past, which precedes the sphere of the present by way of retrospect; the sphere of the future, which follows the sphere of the present by way of prospect. Examples of absolute names of time: now, last week, in our century, in the past, in the years to come. These expressions give a temporal characteristic of an event in reference to the present. The non-absolute time denotation does not characterise an event in terms of orientation towards the present. This kind of denotation may be either "relative" or "factual". The relative expression of time correlates two or more events showing some of them either as preceding the others, or following the others, or happening at one and the same time with them. Here belong such words and phrases as after that, before that, at one and the same time with, some time later, etc. The factual expression of time either directly states the astronomical time of an event, or else conveys this meaning in terms of historical landmarks. Under this heading should be listed such words and phrases as in the year 1066, during the time of the First World War, at the epoch of Napoleon, at the early period of civilisation, etc.

In conclusion, verbs express events, processes, states, actions, activities, performances and achievements. It is an open class of words. Any word can be verbalized. Morphologically, syntactically and semantically it is a heterogeneous class of words, the most developed one, with the largest paradigm. The verb is a macrosystem of categories (person, number, aspect, tense, correlation, voice, mood) which are microsystems. Each category is based on the opposition of forms, these oppositions being binary and ternary; privative and equipollent (read::reads; read::have read; read::is read; read::is reading, went::goes::shall go, etc.). The verb can be described in terms of the field theory. It has a field-like structure

with a nucleus and a periphery. Its nucleus carries the actional, processive and statal verbs with a full-fledged, developed paradigm, verbs with complete predication, notional verbs with a full nominative value. We see here transitives, intransitives, semantically dual verbs, functioning both as transitives and intransitives (fly, wear, close, develop, eat, wash, etc.). The periphery is composed of semi-notionals with a partial nominative value. These are the verbs with a defective paradigm and an incomplete predication (link-verbs: be, seem, appear, happen, get, grow; modal verbs: must, may, can, should, will; modal equivalents: be to, have to, have got to, etc., auxiliaries : do, have, shall, should, will, would, get, go: Everything has been going just great. The house got burnt); verbs with the relational semantics (include, belong, refer, resemble); verbs with phrasal semantics (begin, stop, continue, come, go, get, stand: He went running, He came running, He got going), substitutes replacing notional (Do you want to go? Yes, I do). All these verbs have no nominative value, they can't predicate by themselves. We find among verbs those with post-positions (to put off, to get off, etc.). Notional verbs are apt to be easily functionalized (I have come to understand you at last), which shows English to be an analytical language. Some verbs are used to impart dynamics to a sentence (Try and do it! I can't go and shoot him!). As compared with Russian, English is twice or thrice as verbal.

While the existence of the aspect category in English is a disputed matter, the tense category is universally recognised. Nobody has ever suggested to characterise the distinction, for example, between *wrote*, *writes*, and *will write* as other than a tense distinction. Thus we shall not have to produce any arguments in favour of the existence of the category in Modern English.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Stephen R. 1985a. Inflectional Morphology. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. 3: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon (pp. 150-201) Cambridge University Press.
2. Armstrong, David F., William C. Stokoe and Sherman E. Wilcox. 1994. Signs of the Origins of Syntax. *Current Anthropology*, 35(4), 349-68.
3. Baugh, Albert C., and Thomas Cable. *A History of the English Language*. 5thed..
4. Bryant M. *A Functional English Grammar*. Boston, 1995.